

Message Text

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FROM NEA-DRAPER

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EAID, SY, LE

SUBJECT: CONGRESSIONAL ACTION ON SYRIAN AID

1. FURTHER INFORMATION EMERGED DURING MY BRIEFINGS ON THE HILL TODAY RE LEBANON. IN RETROSPECT, IT APPEARS TO DEFENDERS OF THE ADMINISTRATION'S POSITION THAT IT WOULD HAVE BEEN BETTER TO HAVE SUPPORTED THE BINGHAM BILL, CALLING FOR A 50 PERCENT REDUCTION IN SYRIAN AID, BECAUSE THE MOOD OF THE HOUSE WAS SUCH THAT ONE OR ANOTHER OF THE AMENDMENTS TO CUT SYRIAN AID WOULD BE PASSED.

2. I MADE THE POINT VERY STRONGLY, INCLUDING TO GROUP OF ARAB-AMERICAN CONGRESSMEN, THAT--THE EXPECTED SYRIAN REACTION ASIDE--THE MARONITE RIGHTIST HOTHEADS IN BEIRUT
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WERE GOING TO BE JUBILANT OVER THIS HOUSE ACTION AS CONSTITUTING AN ENDORSEMENT FOR WHAT THEY HAVE BEEN DOING. I SAID THAT THE CHANCES OF A MAJOR MARONITE MILITIA-SYRIAN CONFRONTATION HAD INCREASED TWENTYFOLD. ONE CONGRESSMAN SAID THAT HE AGREED; IT WAS A VOTE FOR PARTITION.

3. I SAID THERE WAS NO QUESTION, HOWEVER, THAT THE BROAD

MASS OF LEBANESE AMERICANS AND CHRISTIAN LEBANESE IN LEBANON WHO HAD NO POLITICAL AFFILIATION WAS ANGRY, OR MYSTIFIED, OR DEEPLY CONCERNED BY THE SYRIAN SHELLINGS.

4. IT MAY RPT MAY BE TECHNICALLY A LITTLE EASIER TO RESTORE THE PROGRAM IN THE SENATE AND LATER IN A CONFERENCE IN VIEW OF THE FACT THAT THE HOUSE ACTION SIMPLY DROPPED THE EARMARKED MONEY FOR SYRIA AND DID NOT PUT IN LANGUAGE TO THE EFFECT "NO FUNDS UNDER THIS ACT WILL BE..."

5. OUR EARLIER GUIDANCE CABLE SHOWED A RATHER BALANCED COMBINATION OF ELEMENTS CONTRIBUTING TO THE DECISION. IN ORDER OF IMPORTANCE, THE EMOTIONAL REACTION TO CHRISTIANS BEING KILLED IN LEBANON SHOULD BE THE FIRST. VANCE

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